

AFRICA
EDUCATION WATCH

EDUWATCH 2022 WASSCE GHANA MONITORING REPORT

About Africa Education Watch

Africa Education Watch (Eduwatch) is an Education Policy Research and Advocacy Organization working with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Governments and the Private Sector to promote an equitable, accountable and responsive education system that assures of quality and equal opportunities for all. Working with partners in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya and Nigeria, we envision a continent with globally competitive human capital that drives economic and social development.

No part of this publication may be used or reproduced in any manner without prior permission from the copyright holder except in the case of reviews duly acknowledged.

©Africa Education Watch
All rights reserved
October 2022

Cover page picture credit: citinewsroom.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
DETAILED ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	7
Sources of examination fraud	7
School-level monitoring (Examination centres)	7
Online monitoring	11
Evidence of leakages	12
Security of external supervisors and monitors	15
The "Pass or Perish" nature of our assessment system	15
Challenges - confidentiality and collaboration	15
GES' warning letter on 1st September 2022	16
DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE PUBLISHING OF 2021 WASSCE REPORT	17
CONCLUSION	18
RECOMMENDATIONS	19

Abbreviations

Criminal Investigations Department	CID
Ghana Education Service	GES
Inspector General of Police	IGP
Key Performance Indicator	KPI
Ministry of Education	MoE
National Intelligence Bureau	NIB
Senior High School	SHS
Senior High Technical School	SHTS
West African Examinations Council	WAEC
West African Senior School Certificate Examinations	WASSCE
<u>LIST OF TABLES</u>	<u>LIST OF PICTURES</u>
Table 1 - Page 9	Picture 1 - Page 12
Table 2 - Page 10	Picture 2 - Page 12
Table 3 - Page 12	Picture 3 - Page 13
Table 4 - Page 14	Picture 4 - Page 13
	Picture 5 - Page 13
	Picture 6 - Page 14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) is an external assessment conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) after three years of Senior High School (SHS) education. The examination has over the years been characterised by several incidents of online leakage of questions hours before the start of some papers, and institutionalised cheating at some examination centres¹. Eduwatch monitors WASSCE annually in selected examination centres in Ghana, and across social media platforms to assess questions security and compliance with rules and regulations governing the conduct of examinations at centres. These include the conduct of candidates, supervisors, invigilators and security officials. The result of the monitoring is a subject of engagement with the Ministry of Education (MoE), WAEC and Parliament to improve the credibility of the pre-tertiary external assessment system in Ghana and WAEC member states.

The 2022 WASSCE monitoring

Eduwatch monitored the 2022 WASSCE online and in 33 purposively sampled examination centres across the country between July and September 2022. The examination centres, comprising private and public SHSs were selected based on previous records and new reports of alleged mobilization for examination fraud at the examination centres. Most of the centres were from the Bono and Ashanti regions; the two leading destinations for WASSCE tourism².

Which papers were monitored?

The four (4) core WASSCE subjects were purposively sampled in addition to Further (Elective) Mathematics; a subject with a history of leakages. These five subjects translate into twelve papers:

1. English Language 1
2. English Language 2
3. English Language 3
4. Social Studies 1
5. Social Studies 2
6. General (Core) Mathematics 1
7. General (Core) Mathematics 2
8. Integrated Science 1
9. Integrated Science 2
10. Integrated Science 3
11. Further (Elective) Mathematics 1
12. Further (Elective) Mathematics 2

In addition to the subject monitoring, an assessment of the progress made in implementing recommendations of Eduwatch's 2021 WASSCE Monitoring Report and other quality improvement activities of WAEC and MoE was undertaken.

¹ Eduwatch 2021 WASSCE Ghana Monitoring Report

² Remedial students travel from other regions to register and sit for WASSCE with an assurance of the best grades at a cost.

How was data obtained for this report?

- a) Eduwatch obtained primary data from undercover monitors [Key Informants] in 33 SHSs across the country, who provided information on happenings before, during and after the examinations. Monitoring started in July, four weeks before the scheduled start of the examination.
- b) Eduwatch interviewed former WASSCE supervisors.
- c) Eduwatch online monitors were present on 20 rogue social media platforms (paid and free) to collect primary data on leakage of examination questions before the scheduled start of papers.
- d) Eduwatch WASSCE desk reviewed relevant WAEC and MoE reports, statements and documents on WASSCE.

Summary of findings

- a. **Online leakages in two (2) out of 12 papers:** Some questions intercepted ahead of the exams on some rogue Telegram and WhatsApp platforms were later confirmed as leakages. These questions were for Further (Elective) Mathematics 2 and General (Core) Mathematics 2 papers, which were each leaked nine (9) hours prior to their scheduled commencement time.
- b. **Enhanced questions security:** The involvement of the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), a.k.a BNI, in the questions printing and monitoring system in collaboration with WAEC, as facilitated by the MoE, led to minimal incidences of question leakages, compared to WASSCE 2020 and 2021. Online question marketers blamed their inability to leak questions to “tight” security of questions while in transit and at the depots.
- c. **Increased incidences of institutional fraud:** There was the collection of cash ranging from GHC 300 to GHC 3,000 from candidates by some school authorities, usually led by the Assistant Headmaster (Academic) in return for supervised cheating. In some schools, questions were solved and transmitted through WhatsApp platforms or written on whiteboards for candidates to copy. Both practices are pervasive.
- d. **Poor motivation for external supervisors:** The GHC 25.20 payment per session for supervisors in 2021, coupled with the 10-month delay in payment, discourages effective supervision and exposes supervisors to the risk of monetary influence.
- e. **Inadequate and ineffective external supervision:** Out of 776 supervisors deployed to 776 centres, only 18% were external from WAEC. The majority (82%) were staff of Ghana Education Service (GES), including some headteachers, a situation which raises potential Conflict of Interest since the WASSCE pass rate is a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for school heads and other GES directors. The role of some school authorities in institutionalized collusion to cheat, involving GES supervisors and invigilators is well documented by WAEC, Eduwatch and Corruption Watch.

- f. Strong community participation in examination fraud:** Some occurrences affirmed previous reports of a strong community participation in examination fraud. There were recorded incidents of vandalism, targeted attacks and various scheming aimed at removing some teachers and heads of schools who refused to allow WASSCE fraud to occur at the examination centre. In the Baglo community (Oti Region), the Baglo Youth Association and Old Students Association petitioned the Regional Education Directorate to transfer the headmaster of the Baglo Ridge Senior High Technical School (SHTS) on grounds of some frivolous allegations, including causing an abysmal failure of candidates in the 2021 WASSCE due to his strict supervision at the examination centre. Even after exoneration by an investigative Committee set up by the Regional Directorate, the headmaster had to eventually flee the campus for safety reasons.
- g. Lack of urgency by the police in prosecuting examination fraud suspects:** A year after Eduwatch submitted a formal complaint to the Director-General of the Criminal Investigations Department (CID), with evidence on the source of leaked questions, and some school authorities involved in institutionalized cheating during 2021 WASSCE, no formal feedback has been received. A formal follow-up petition to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) also yielded no response, as the same perpetrators continued to sell questions during the 2022 WASSCE.
- h. Serialization:** Contrary to the commitment by the Minister of Education to introduce the serialization of questions to discourage exams fraud, there was no serialization for written papers. Only a limited serialization was detected in multiple-choice (objective) questions at the regional level. Meaning, the same questions followed a different order of arrangement in each region. This, however, was of no relevance, since prior to the commencement of the exams, questions dealers were aware the multiple-choice questions would be unique for each region. Full serialization involves administering different sets of questions for candidates at a particular centre.

General observation

Ghana's "Pass or Perish" external assessment system, where a student must obtain an examination score of grade A1 - C6 or risk being tagged as a failure, with no formal pathway for formal career progression, is a major driver of the demand for exam fraud. The system has created an environment of anxiety, stress, desperation and fraud, since candidates must pass at all cost or become 'useless'. The increased demand for exam fraud will continue so far as many students (supported by parents) cannot imagine staying at home for years after SHS because of a D7 or an E8, bearing in mind the high cost of remedial schooling, which averages more than twice the per unit cost of free SHS. In their minds, they must pass at all cost.

Key recommendations

- a.** The MoE must convene a national forum on external assessment to enable a broad, participatory review leading to a reform of Ghana's external assessment system, with focus on governance, relevance and quality assurance.
- b.** The NIB must investigate the leakage of questions, the outcome of which must improve their security and accountability systems. Persons responsible must be sanctioned in accordance with law.
- c.** The MoE must explore the possibility of providing access to market-led, pre-university distance programmes for candidates who score at least E8 in all subjects, to improve and pursue other careers. This would ensure WASSCE candidates who do not score F9 in their core or electives are supported to upgrade, thereby reducing the "Pass or Perish" culture driving exam fraud.
- d.** WAEC must end the use of GES staff as supervisors. The GES cannot self-supervise themselves in an exam which some of their staff who are the invigilators, have been repeatedly cited for colluding with candidates (their own students) to facilitate cheating for financial gain and also to meet their KPIs.
- e.** The MoE and WAEC must re-negotiate the fees for invigilators and supervisors to realistic levels and ensure the prompt payment of same.
- f.** WAEC must engage the services of external supervisors who are not staff of GES, or residents of the districts they would be assigned to.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Sources of examination fraud

There are two sources of examinations fraud; primary and secondary. Primary takes the form of questions leakage, which usually occurs the night or dawn before a paper. Secondary takes place in and around the examination centre, and is characterised by supervised cheating, candidates copying answers from papers, WhatsApp platforms and on white boards. All sources constitute big business to school authorities, teachers, supervisors and agents involved. On the average, a candidate pays GHC 300, meaning, an average SHS can easily make GHC 300,000 from WASSCE fraud.

Ahead of the 2022 WASSCE, MoE requested the services of the NIB (a.k.a. BNI) to strengthen questions security, resulting in a reduction in questions leakage (primary source) while increasing the demand for examination centre fraud (secondary source). Once many candidates have paid, service must be rendered at all cost. This means, every official at the exams centre must be bribed by school authorities to permit supervised answers transmission and copying. Our experience in some WASSCE tourism districts indicate that, an average of GHC 10,000 is required to compromise invigilators and supervisors for a paper. This includes paying the subject teachers to solve the questions.

School-level monitoring (Examination Centres)

The school-level monitoring affirmed significant examination centre fraud in 14 out of 33 schools monitored. According to our Key Informants, major stakeholders included [some] teachers, assistant headmasters (academic), candidates, supervisors, invigilators. The modus operandi included:

- a) mobilizing monies from candidates one month prior to the commencement of examinations and during each paper;
- b) providing compromised supervision to enable cheating at examination centres;
- c) obtaining and solving questions for candidates before or during the exam session; and
- d) transmitting answers to candidates through WhatsApp platforms, photocopied papers and white boards stationed in examination halls.

a. Mobilizing monies from candidates to fund exams fraud: Two months ahead of the exams, managements of some schools caused candidates to pay monies to facilitate fraud when WASSCE started. While candidates paid between GHC 300 to GHC 3,000 for the entire examinations, others took between GHC 20 to GHC 100 before each paper.

Monies were often paid to designated teachers, or through dedicated bank accounts, with proceeds used to pay 'external' supervisors, invigilators, and security officials at the exam centres to permit copying and supervised answers transmission through whiteboards, phones and papers. This fraud was coordinated by designated teachers under the supervision of some assistant headmasters (academic).

- b. Obtaining and solving questions for candidates:** Before each paper, subject teachers were put on standby in designated rooms known as strong rooms. In some schools, that was either the library, ICT or a science laboratory. Once question papers were unsealed and distributed about 30 minutes prior to commencement of the exam, the designated teacher (invigilator) snaps and sends a copy of the question paper to the subject teacher(s) to solve them quickly on sheets of papers for transmission to candidates.
- c. Transmitting answers to candidates:** Once questions were solved by subject teachers, the solutions were photocopied and distributed to candidates manually on paper or via WhatsApp platforms. In some centres, solutions were written on white boards for candidates to copy at the examination centre.
- d. Compromised supervision at examination centres:** Proceeds of monetary payments were used to bribe external supervisors, invigilators and security officials stationed at centres to permit supervised answers transmission and copying during the exams. With security compromised, some examination centres managed to prevent the entry of external supervisors and monitors. WAEC confirms this practice in a statement³.
- e. Deliberate delayed entry into exam hall:** WAEC's guidelines for the 2022 WASSCE included not to open question packs earlier than 45 minutes prior to the start of papers. The failure of most questions to leak compelled candidates to adjust by adopting a delayed seating approach, which entailed delaying entrance to the exam hall for up to 30 minutes after the sharing of papers. In one of the schools monitored in the Central Region, some candidates reporting for the Biology Paper 2, on 2nd September 2022 arrived up to 30 minutes after sharing of papers, around 9:30 AM. Such delays, which were common, enabled candidates to have foreknowledge of questions via social media and research answers before taking their seat at the exam hall.
- f. Inadequate and ineffective external supervision:** Supervision to ensure strict compliance with rules of conduct of both candidates and invigilators is key to achieving credible examinations. Therefore, WAEC deploys supervisors to provide an external oversight on the activities of invigilators and by extension, candidates. The quality of examination centre supervision therefore has a direct impact on the credibility of the examinations.

According to WAEC, 776 supervisors were deployed to 776 centres for the 2022 WASSCE. Out of this number, only 18% were appointed by WAEC. The majority (82%) were GES staff appointed by GES, including some SHS headmasters. This arrangement raises a potential Conflict of Interest situation, bearing in mind that the WASSCE pass rate is a KPI for SHS heads and other GES directors. Also, the fact that many school authorities have been cited in various reported institutionalized collusion to cheat during WASSCE makes the continued use of GES staff to supervise GES invigilators at WASSCE ineffective.

³ WAEC second update on the conduct of the WASSCE for school candidates 2022 - September 16, 2022.

Table 1: Regional distribution of supervisors and centres for the WASSCE for School Candidates, 2022

S/N	REGION	NO. OF CENTRES	SUPERVISORS		TOTAL
			APPOINTED BY GES	APPOINTED BY WAEC	
1.	Greater Accra	73	48	25	73
2.	Eastern	103	89	14	103
3.	Central	83	66	17	83
4.	Western/Western North	58	54	4	58
5.	Ashanti	163	125	38	163
6.	Bono/Bono East/Ahafo	110	68	42	110
7.	Volta/Oti	83	80	3	83
8.	Northern/North East/Savannah	49	47	2	49
9.	Upper East	30	30	-	30
10.	Upper West	23	23	1	23
TOTAL		776	630	146	776

Source: WAEC response to Eduwatch RTI request, 2022.

A recent undercover Corruption Watch video which exposed school authorities leading in collecting monies from candidates to provide cheating supervision, including solving and transmitting questions to examination centres in the 'presence' of supervisors is enough evidence that, GES staff cannot provide any effective 'external' supervision of GES invigilators and candidates.

Table 1 presents the regional distribution of supervisors and centres for the 2022 WASSCE for School Candidates. The Upper East region had no WAEC-appointed supervisor for the 30 examination centres in that region, while the Upper West, Northern, North East, Savannah, Volta and Oti regions had a total of six (6) WAEC-appointed supervisors monitoring 155 examination centres. This invariably means, for any particular paper, there were a total of 179 examination centres in the seven regions without a WAEC supervisor; a situation which falls below the standard of supervision required for a credible examination in the midst of a challenging sub-culture of examination fraud.

Table 2: Average number of WAEC-appointed supervisors per centre for the WASSCE for School Candidates, 2022

S/N	REGION	NO. OF CENTRES	SUPERVISORS APPOINTED BY WAEC	AVERAGE PER CENTRE
1.	Greater Accra	73	25	0.3
2.	Eastern	103	14	0.1
3.	Central	83	17	0.2
4.	Western/Western North	58	4	0.1
5.	Ashanti	163	38	0.2
6.	Bono/Bono East/Ahafo	110	42	0.4
7.	Volta/Oti	83	3	0.05
8.	Northern/North East/Savannah	49	2	0.04
9.	Upper East	30	-	-
10.	Upper West	23	1	0.04
TOTAL		776	146	0.2

Source: WAEC response to Eduwatch RTI request, 2022.

The situation is not different in the Ashanti, Bono, Ahafo and Bono East regions which are perceived as the hub of examination fraud, based on our three years of monitoring WASSCE. The regions have a total of 273 examination centres with only 80 WAEC appointed supervisors. An analysis of the ratio of WAEC supervisors to examination centres, per Table 2, indicates 0.02:1 (Ashanti) and 0.4:1 (Bono, Ahafo, Bono East), against an ideal figure of 1:1. This means, about 77% of examination centres in Ashanti were without WAEC appointed supervisors, compared to 62% in Bono, Ahafo and Bono East combined. This is against an ideal situation of one WAEC-appointed supervisor per centre.

Our field monitors reported that apart from examination centres situated near depots, the remaining did not receive WAEC-appointed external supervisors for all the core subjects monitored. There were, however, GES-appointed supervisors that came around, spending an average of 30 minutes because they had to visit another examination centre. However, immediately they left, invigilation was compromised. It is Eduwatch's considered opinion that, spending fewer time than the duration of the paper a supervisor is scheduled to supervise [also] could amount to compromised supervision, bearing in mind the sub-culture of examination fraud surrounding WASSCE.

g. Poor remuneration for supervision: Additionally, the payment of GHC 25.20 pesewas per session for external supervisors coupled with the over 10 months delay in payment, continues to discourage effective discharge of their duties and makes them more open to compromise.

h. Community involvement in examination fraud: In addition to the above-mentioned strategies, local communities played key roles in sustaining examination fraud by either mobilizing resources to support the practice or causing the transfer of persons perceived to oppose the agenda in the school.

At the Baglo Ridge SHTS, two (2) petitions dated 15th and 28th March, 2022 were submitted to the Regional Education Director by the Baglo Youth Association and the Schools' Old Students seeking the transfer of the headmaster for among others, his strict supervision of the 2021 WASSCE, which according to the petitioners, contributed to a massive failure of candidates. While the Investigative Committee established by the Regional Education Directorate to investigate the allegations exonerated the school head of the allegations, the man eventually had to flee for his life on Tuesday 13th September, 2022 after an invasion of his residence by the youth due to another WASSCE related issue.

While such unfortunate incidents are not new, their recurrence poses a major setback to the fight against exam fraud. Without the support of local communities, it will be difficult to end examinations fraud.

Our monitors also identified the increased competition for pride among schools, teachers and the community, due to the WASSCE Ranking (League Table) circulated after the release of results. The League Table, coupled with WASSCE pass rates being a Key Performance Indicator for school heads serve as potential motivation and contributes to institutionalized fraud during the exams.

Online monitoring

The outcome of the online monitoring reaffirms previous findings in our 2020 and 2021 WASSCE reports regarding a multimillion business enterprise built on leaked question papers from uncertain sources, and marketed to candidates, parents, teachers and school owners using WhatsApp and Telegram platforms.

a. Enhanced questions security: The regular use of the Ghana Police Service in WASSCE questions security created considerable familiarity and relationships since some police officers spent up to ten years or more, at sensitive stations within the question supply chain. In 2020, some of our online question marketers alleged having obtained their questions from their police contacts within WAEC. The introduction of the BNI to monitor the printing of questions as indicated in WAEC's first update⁴ for WASSCE 2022, made a significant difference.

b. Low patronage of online questions: Eduwatch monitors paid GHC 400 for the full complement of questions for General Science. This was cheaper, compared to the GHC 100 to 150 per subject paid in WASSCE 2021. The monitors observed that, the reduced patronage of online questions due to the inability of marketers to deliver questions prior to papers, contrary to the usual practice, could have been responsible for the low pricing. It was also obvious that, as a result of tightened questions security, especially after the English paper proved elusive, a lot more demand shifted from the online source of examination fraud to the examination centre.

⁴ WAEC first update on the conduct of the WASSCE for school candidates 2022 - August 22, 2022.

c. Questions leakage: Examination questions were leaked into various rogue social media pages on Telegram and WhatsApp nine (9) hours prior to the scheduled time for writing of papers. Eduwatch purposively sampled and monitored the four (4) core subjects in addition to Further (Elective) Mathematics, a subject with a history of leakages.

Table 3: Time of Leakages for Papers Monitored

SUBJECT PAPER	DATE FOR WRITING PAPER	DATE FOR LEAKAGE OF PAPER	TIME OF LEAK
Further (Elective) Mathematics 2	6 th September 2022	5 th September 2022	23:32 GMT
General (Core) Mathematics 2	15 th September 2022	14 th September 2022	23:09 GMT

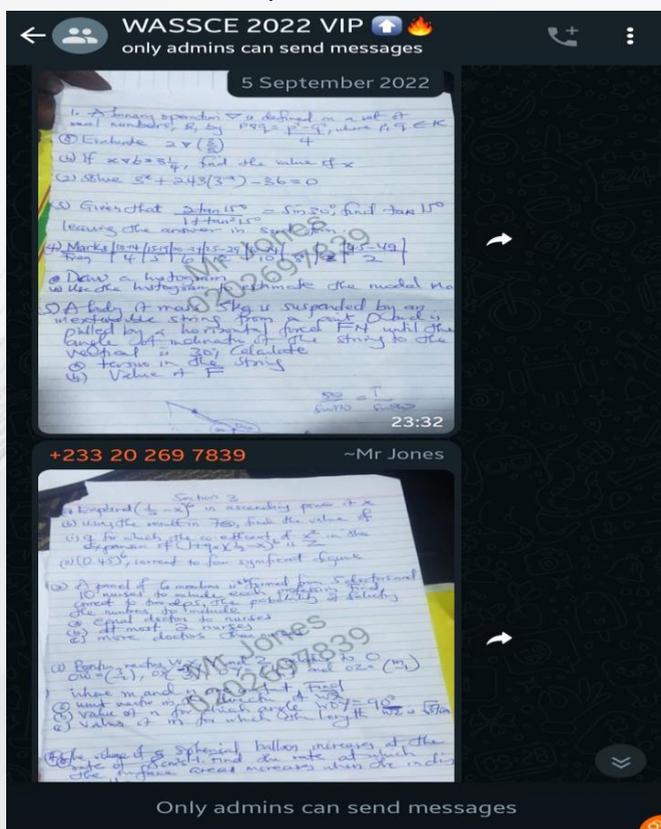
Source: Eduwatch WASSCE 2022 Field Monitoring

Table 3 presents the times questions were leaked. Eduwatch online monitors reported that all leaked papers appeared on the "Legit WASSCE" WhatsApp VIP page in the night before the Elective Maths 2 and Core Maths 2 papers. As usual, the questions were later circulated on some free telegram platforms one (1) to two (2) hours to the start of the paper as a form of advert. The leaks were confirmed by our school-level monitors. The evidence of leaks, including the time are available for verification.

Evidence of Leakages

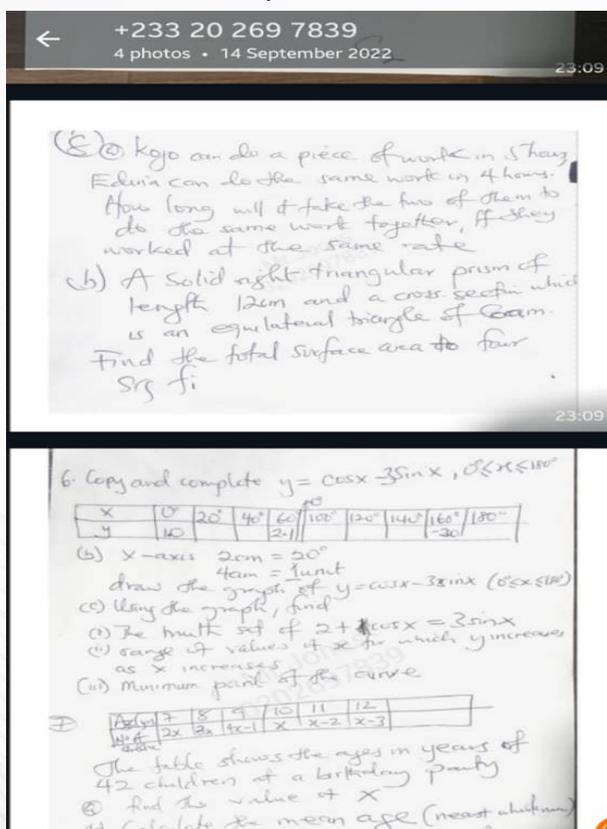
Picture 1

Elective Mathematics questions leaked on Legit WASSCE WhatsApp VIP page at 11:32 PM on 5th September, 2022



Picture 2

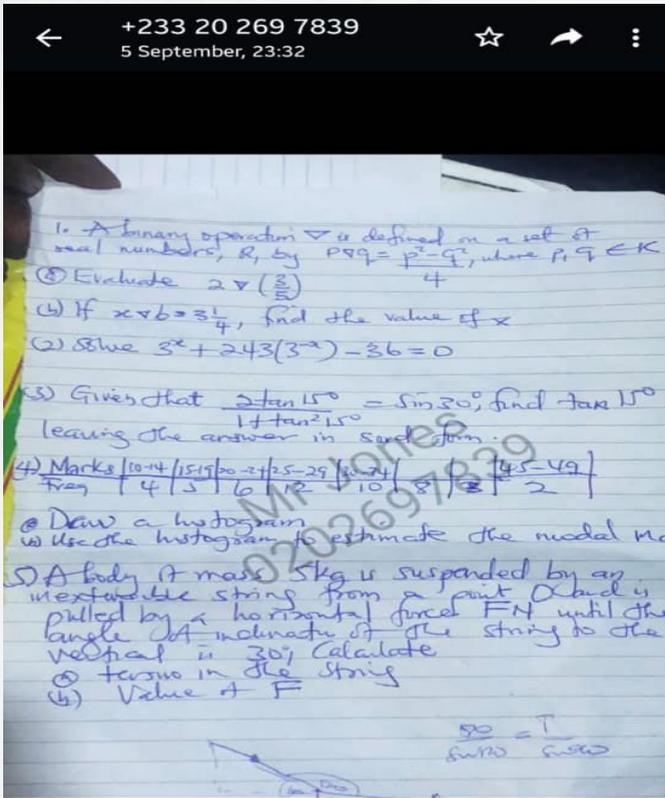
Core Mathematics questions leaked on a Legit WASSCE WhatsApp VIP page at 11:09 PM on 14th September, 2022



Evidence of Leakages – Elective Mathematics

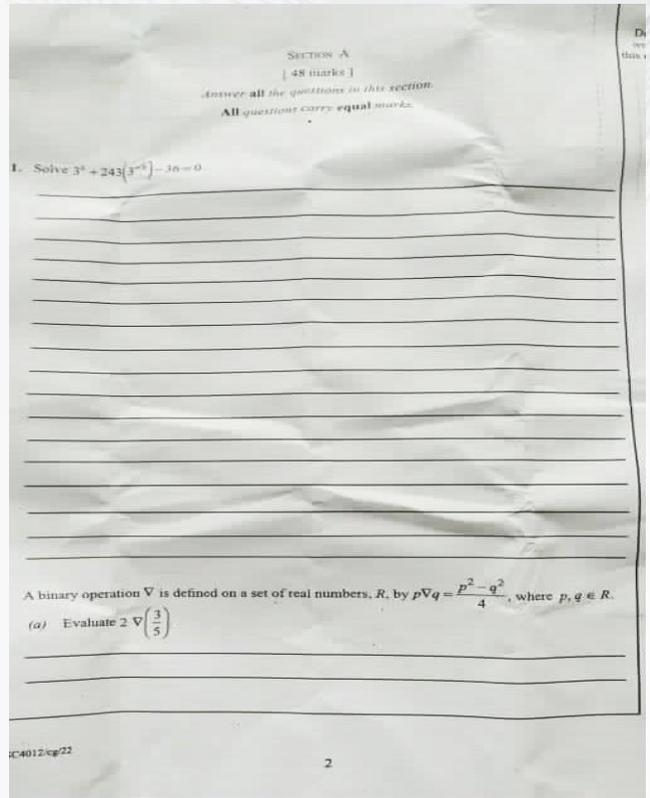
Picture 3

Elective Mathematics questions leaked on Legit WASSCE WhatsApp VIP page at 11:32 PM on 5th September, 2022



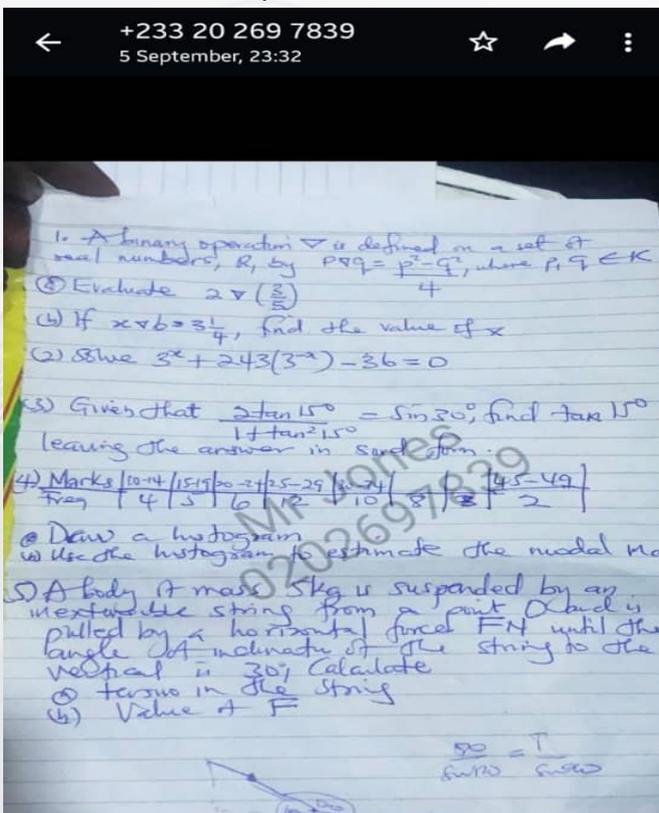
Picture 4

Actual Elective Mathematics paper 2 written by candidates at 08:30 AM on 6th September, 2022



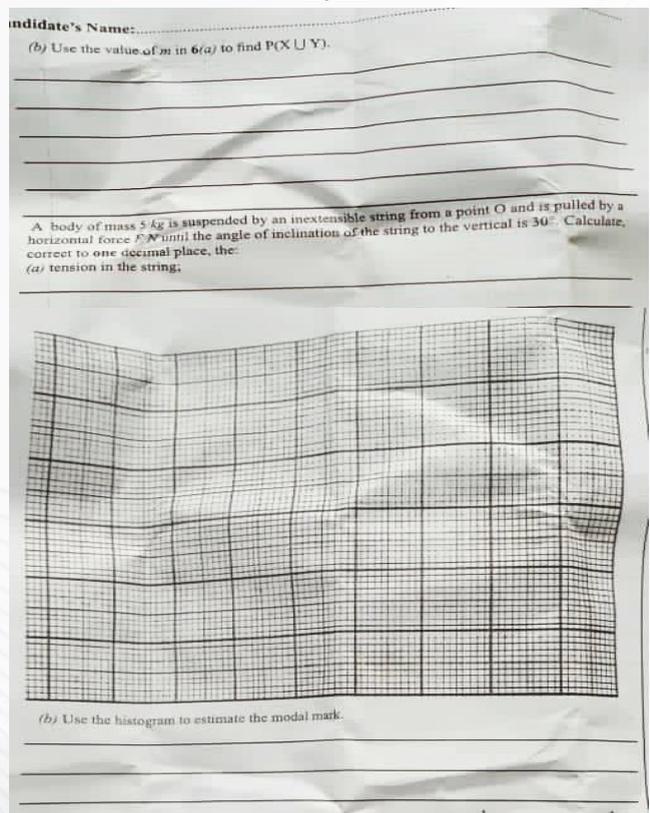
Picture 3

Elective Mathematics questions leaked on Legit WASSCE WhatsApp VIP page at 11:32 PM on 5th September, 2022



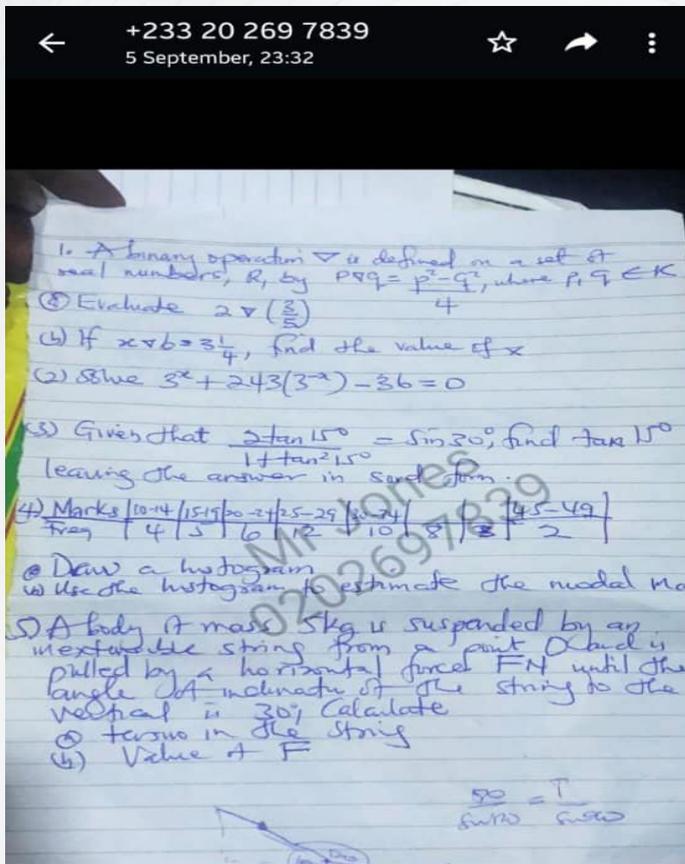
Picture 5

Actual Elective Mathematics paper 2 written by candidates at 08:30 AM on 6th September, 2022



Picture 3

Elective Mathematics questions leaked on Legit WASSCE WhatsApp VIP page at 11:32 PM on 5th September, 2022



Picture 6

Actual Elective Mathematics paper 2 written by candidates at 08:30 AM on 6th September, 2022

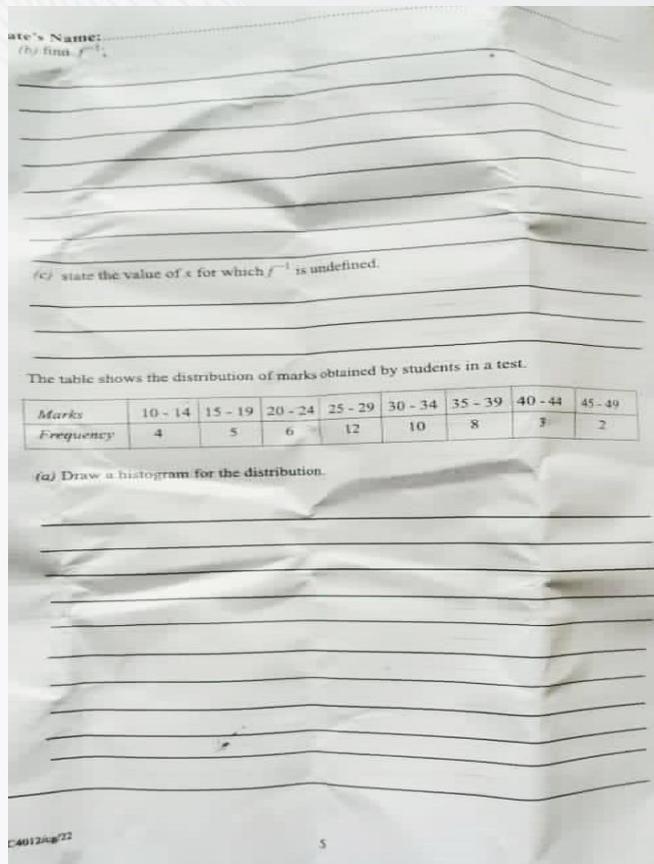


Table 4: Analysis of time of leakages between 2021 and 2022

SUBJECT PAPER	TIME OF LEAK IN 2021	TIME OF LEAK IN 2022	VARIANCE (MINUTES)
Elective Mathematics 2	23:41 GMT	23:32 PM	-9
Core Mathematics 2	06:23 GMT	23:09 PM	-434

Source: Eduwatch WASSCE 2022 Field Monitoring

It is observed that, the two (2) leaked papers were among the 11 that leaked in 2021, as captured in Eduwatch’s WASSCE 2021 monitoring report. A comparative analysis of the time of leaks is critical to determine progress in questions security or otherwise. An analysis of the time of leaks, as presented in Table 4, indicates that the two papers (Core Mathematics 2 and Elective Mathematics 2) respectively leaked 434 and 9 minutes earlier in 2022 compared to 2021. This means, on the average, papers which leaked in 2022 leaked much earlier than in 2021; a sign of an average decline in security for those particular papers.

Security of external supervisors and monitors

The role of external supervisors and monitors is critical in ensuring quality in the conduct of examinations. However, the lives of most of these personnel have been at risk while discharging their duties. While some external supervisors have been compromised to condone examinations fraud in schools, other incorruptible ones are threatened, targeted and attacked by some candidates and school authorities.

According to WAEC⁵, on Monday 12th September, 2022 at Santa Maria, a WAEC monitor was beaten after monitoring the conduct of the examination at Santa Maria SHS. This was due to poor security after the discharge of his duties. WAEC again indicates that, some centres closed their main gates to prevent their monitoring teams from even entering their compound. An Eduwatch monitor in Wassa Akropong reported that the security official at the main gate of one of the centres was ordered to delay entry of any external supervisor or monitor, and alert authorities accordingly before allowing entry.

These attacks are possible because external supervisors and monitors have inadequate security, forcing some otherwise good ones to either condone to the subculture of exams fraud due to the fear of being harmed, or resign. It is important to strengthen the security of supervisors and monitors to boost their confidence.

The “Pass or Perish” nature of our assessment system

Ghana’s “Pass Or Perish” external assessment system, where a student must obtain an examination score of grade A1 - C6 or risk being tagged as a failure, with no formal pathway for formal career progression, is a major driver of the demand for exams fraud. The system has created an environment of anxiety, stress, desperation and fraud, since candidates must pass at all cost or become ‘useless’. The increased demand for exam fraud will continue so far as many students (supported by parents) cannot imagine staying at home for years after SHS because of a D7 or an E8, bearing in mind the high cost of remedial schooling which averages more than twice the per unit cost of free SHS. In their minds, they must pass at all cost.

The MoE must explore the possibility of providing access to market-led, pre-university distance programmes for candidates who score at least E8 in all subjects, to improve and pursue other careers. This would ensure WASSCE candidates who do not score F9 in their core or electives are supported to upgrade, thereby reducing the “Pass or Perish” culture driving exam fraud.

Challenges - Confidentiality and collaboration

Unlike previous editions of our WASSCE monitoring reports, names of schools have been withheld for security reasons. This is to protect the identity of our Key Informants in their respective institutions, due to strenuous attempts by some school authorities to fish out suspected Key Informants in previously published Eduwatch reports which mentioned names of schools. The list of schools shall only be provided upon request by relevant agencies. The only schools mentioned in this report are those Eduwatch has no Key Informants, where findings were based on verified secondary data.

⁵ WAEC second update on the conduct of the WASSCE for school candidates 2022 - September 16, 2022.

As part of our efforts to assist WAEC to identify and sanction perpetrators of examination fraud, on 22nd August 2022, after two months of monitoring, Eduwatch submitted a list of 24 schools to WAEC (copied to the GES and MoE) for enhanced WAEC external supervision. Our monitors had picked up information on a conspiracy between some school authorities and students to cheat. In many of these schools, monies had already been paid. This was ahead of the commencement of written papers.

GES' warning letter on 1st September 2022

Unfortunately, contrary to our contemplation, instead of using the intelligence to deploy WAEC external supervisors to ensure strengthened supervision in the schools, a circular was rather issued by the GES on 1st September, 2022 warning the said schools to desist from any such intentions. The letter significantly obstructed our monitoring in some of the schools.

Immediately after the GES circular, it became apparent that, someone from either GES or WAEC had allegedly informed the owner of St. Andrews SHS, a private SHS with three campuses in the Central Region (Dunkwa-On-Offin, Assin Fosu and Mankessim) that, Mr. Kofi Asare, the Eduwatch Executive Director was the one who submitted his schools' name to GES and WAEC for enhanced external supervision. As a result, the owner of St. Andrews allegedly planted a story on Opera News, an online portal to defame Mr. Kofi Asare, calling him a puppet of donors seeking to destroy people's businesses by submitting their names to WAEC. When questioned by Eduwatch, Opera News was compelled to take down the news item.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE PUBLISHING OF 2021 WASSCE REPORT

This section outlines various happenings since publishing our 2021 WASSCE Ghana Monitoring Report. They are outlined below;

1. **Deployment of BNI for 2021 BECE and WASSCE 2022:** As a result of our WASSCE 2021 report engagement, the MoE requested the support of the NIB a.k.a. BNI to collaborate with WAEC, to strengthen questions security. Since then, we have seen a considerable decline in the leakage of questions, both in the 2021 BECE and WASSCE 2022.
2. **Petition to CID and IGP:** One year after submitting a petition to the Director General of the CID upon evidences gathered during WASSCE 2021 monitoring, we are yet to receive any official feedback. A follow-up petition to the IGP has yielded no results. This has led to a considerable loss of confidence in the commitment of the police to fight examination fraud.
3. **Petition to GES on All for Christ SHTS:** In August 2022, Corruption Watch Ghana in partnership with Eduwatch premiered a video documentary dubbed #TheCheatingSquad, which exposed the fraudulent schemes of management, teachers and invigilators at All for Christ SHS and Duadaso SHS in the Bono region, during WASSCE 2021. Flowing from the evidence, Eduwatch petitioned the Director General of GES to interdict perpetrators in the video, withdraw the approval of All for Christ SHTS - a private SHTS, in line with section 42(b) of the Pre-Tertiary Education Law. Our petition is yet to receive a formal response.
4. **All for Christ SHTS still a centre for WASSCE 2022:** One year after Eduwatch reported widespread examination fraud at All for Christ SHTS, and submitted evidence to the CID, WAEC and the Director General of GES, the school was again used as an examinations centre in the 2022 WASSCE. In another development, against all evidence, including pictures and video of authorities openly teaching students on whiteboards, the results of candidates in that school were eventually released after an initial scrutiny by WAEC. It is necessary to subject to scrutiny the quality of investigations conducted into the massive cheating at All For Christ SHTS and why that school is still an examination centre.
5. **Serialisation of Examination Papers:** Following the launch of our 2021 WASSCE report, the MoE committed to introduce serialisation of questions, as a way of curbing cheating during examinations. Serialisation involves administering different sets of questions for candidates at a particular centre. This would make it difficult for cheating to occur in the examination hall, as many versions of the paper would be distributed and answered simultaneously.

However, our field monitors observed a limited serialization in the multiple choice (objective) questions at the regional level. For instance, in the General (Core) Mathematics Paper 1, question number 1 for candidates in the Volta region will be number 4 for those in the Bono region, which also meant that, candidates in examination halls all over the country still answered the same set of questions. It is important to advance the serialization from limited to full serialization and extended to cover all papers.

CONCLUSION

The high stakes nature of Ghana's secondary education external assessment system has led to a strong candidates' demand for examination fraud, backed by school/community participation with monetary incentives. This continues to sustain and grow the menace of examination fraud into a lucrative business activity. There is considerable inertia of law enforcement and administrative bodies, either informed by limited capacity or institutional will to identify and sanction all perpetrators of this fraud timeously and decisively, thereby creating an environment of impunity among supply side actors - school authorities, question marketers, supervisors, and security officials.

Some teachers and school authorities, contrary to their professional duty as invigilators, supervisors, tutors, and mentors of discipline, have rather become stakeholders in this fraudulent business. Similarly, some bad elements within the security system, instead of ensuring a watertight questions security, leak questions to their questions marketing agents for profit motives.

The introduction by the Minister of Education, of the NIB, an external security agency, to augment the work of the local police and provide support to WAEC, has brought substantial improvement in questions security, albeit limited, as the NIB is not, and cannot be present at every examination centre.

Amid these challenges, the apparent need for reform system is hampered by the absence of a regulator for the assessment sector, coupled with resistance of WAEC to radical reforms proposed by Civil Society and the MoE. There appears to be no consensus between WAEC, MoE and Civil Society on the strategy, approach and roadmap for reforming the external assessment system. Ghana must initiate a conversation on reforming her assessment system, and facilitate similar conversations within the WAEC Community - Nigeria, Liberia, Gambia and Sierra Leone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The MoE must convene a national forum on external assessment to discuss the following recommendations:

Immediate

1. The CID must investigate and prosecute perpetrators of examination fraud with evidence provided in petitions submitted by WAEC and Eduwatch during and after the 2021 WASSCE.
2. The NIB must investigate the leakage of questions, the outcome of which must improve their security systems and accountability. Persons responsible for the leakage, and those culpable for commercializing leaked questions must be sanctioned in accordance with law.
3. The MoE must explore the possibility of providing access to market-led, pre-university distance programmes for candidates who score at least E8 in all subjects, to improve and pursue careers. This would ensure WASSCE candidates who do not score F in their core or electives are supported to upgrade.
4. GES must interdict perpetrators (GES staff) of examinations fraud evidenced in the Corruption Watch video, and initiate processes to close down All for Christ SHTS in line with section 42(b) of the Pre-Tertiary Education Law.
5. The MoE and WAEC must re-negotiate the fees for invigilators, and supervisors and ensure the prompt payment of same.
6. WAEC must engage the services of external supervisors who are not staff of GES, or residents of the districts they would be assigned to.
7. GES must sanction staff involved in examination fraud, in accordance with their code of conduct.
8. The introduction of other assessment bodies into the pre-tertiary assessment space to compete with WAEC must be considered by the MoE.

Medium to long term

1. The MoE must seek the buy-in of WAEC member countries in the assessment sector reform (including serialization) agenda to curb examination centre cheating.
2. The MoE must prioritize the provision of security for external supervisors, monitors and invigilators, to provide a sense of safety during and after the discharge of their work.
3. GES must adopt a KPI that rewards heads of SHSs based on the record of no incidences of examinations fraud during WASSCE. This will checkmate the current KPI for school heads on WASSCE pass rate.
4. To minimize examination malpractice, CCTV cameras should be installed at all examination centres, including their immediate precincts, and monitored by external agents.
5. To end the leakage, the questions distribution system should be digitized as explained in Eduwatch's Policy Brief Vol. 22⁶. An end-to-end encrypted mail system should be developed for transmitting questions, 30 minutes before every paper, with security printers installed at all centres. This will cut out the human elements involved from the printing, sorting, packing, transporting, and storage at depots.
6. MoE and Parliament must support the amendment of the WAEC Act to criminalize the various new types of examination fraud.

⁶ <https://africaeducationwatch.org/publication/curbing-examination-fraud-through-innovative-technology>

NOTES

EDUWATCH 2022 WASSCE GHANA MONITORING REPORT

The WASSCE monitoring report is an annual publication of
Africa Education Watch

FOR ENQUIRIES, CONTACT:

 Africa Education Watch, 25 Nii Torgbor Avenue, East Legon

 info@africaeducationwatch.org

 www.africaeducationwatch.org

 0303 975 001

  @AfricaEduWatch

© Africa Education Watch 2022

